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How to avoid Tuberculosis



KEEP WELL SERIES No. 3



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TREASURY DEPARTMENT
UNITED STATES PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICE

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This pamphlet was prepared especially for the information of soldiers, sailors, marines, and nurses discharged from military duty, and is designed to help those who are ill regain health and strength and to stimulate the interest in public-health matters, awakened during their service with the military forces.

How to Avoid Tuberculosis

TUBERCULOSIS is caused by a living germ in the lungs. The body of a healthy person will resist its growth and may kill the germs, but in a weak body and without proper care the germs multiply until the lungs are consumed and the person dies.

These germs are found in the sputum (spit) of a consumptive—in small numbers in the very early stages of the disease, in larger numbers as the disease progresses, and in countless millions in the late stages.

Among the earlier symptoms which one can observe, and which should lead one at once to consult a physician, are: Slight cough, lasting a month or longer; loss of weight; slight fever in the afternoon; bleeding from the lungs.

Many persons who have these early symptoms of tuberculosis lose valuable time, and often their only chance of recovery, by relying on the promises of patent-medicine fakers and medical quacks. Don't take patent medicines and don't go to quack doctors who advertise that they cure tuberculosis by some method known only to themselves.

WHAT TO DO.

If you think you have consumption, go at once to a private physician or to a tuberculosis clinic or dispensary.

Make sure that your lungs are carefully examined. Remember that this can not be done unless the chest has been entirely uncovered. Therefore have no confidence in a doctor who examines your lungs through your clothing, or, worse still, prescribes for your cough without even examining your lungs.

If there is any suspicion of tuberculosis, your sputum should be examined microscopically. This is usually done free of charge by the State Board of Health. Your local health officer will help you to get the examination made.

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SOME FACTS.

Every three minutes some one in the United States dies from consumption.

One hundred and fifty thousand persons die from it in the United States each year.

One person of every ten who die in the United States dies of consumption.

THINGS TO REMEMBER.

1. Fresh air is as necessary to health as pure and nourishing food.
2. People should not sleep in overcrowded rooms, nor with closed windows.
3. Homes and workshops must be clean and thoroughly ventilated. Dirt and impure air are the allies of tuberculosis.
4. Persons with colds or coughs of long standing or persons who are losing in weight or strength should consult a doctor or go to a dispensary or clinic. It is dangerous to wait.
5. Careless spitting spreads the disease. Sick persons should burn their spit.
6. Though no one should ever sleep with a consumptive, a careful consumptive is not dangerous to those with whom he lives and works.
7. The large majority of people probably have had tuberculosis in their systems, but they do not become sick with it because they take good care of their general health and strength.
8. Always cover your mouth and nose with a handkerchief when you cough or sneeze and insist on others doing the same.

LEARN TO LOVE FRESH AIR.

When you come in from outdoors and find the air in your rooms stale and stuffy and foul smelling, open the windows wide and let in plenty of fresh air from outside. Open the door, too, so that the fresh air can freely enter.

Become a fresh-air crank—even at the risk of being disliked. Better a live fresh-air crank than an almost lifeless hothouse invalid.

Do all you can to avoid crowds in closed or poorly ventilated rooms. Not only does the bad air lower your resistance, but you are in danger of catching disease from others.

Don't ride in a crowded street car when you are going only a short distance. Walk!

Walk a mile in the open air twice a day. It will add ten years to your life; if you don't believe it, try it and see.

Keep the windows of your bedroom wide open, day and night, even in winter. You can't overdose yourself with fresh air, and disease germs can't endure it.

For further information on tuberculosis, see your local health officer, or write to your State Board of Health, or to the United States Public Health Service, Washington, D. C.

Other Publications on Tuberculosis

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